

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009*

**Remarks at a Fundraiser for Senator Harry Reid in Las Vegas, Nevada**  
*May 26, 2009*

Thank you so much. It is good to be back in Vegas. I was telling people, I am back in Caesars. That was the hotel where we stayed at when we were campaigning here in Nevada. I thought I had a pretty nice room. *[Laughter]* But now that I'm President, they upgraded me. I got the upgrade. And it's a really nice room now, man. *[Laughter]*

It is good to see all of you. How about Bette Midler? Right? Sheryl Crow, Rachael Yamagata, Rita Rudner, and Clint Holmes, give it up for our outstanding performers.

I want to thank all of the hard-working elected officials in Nevada, many of whom are here tonight. But there are a handful that I've got to give a special shout-out to: first of all, Congresswoman Shelley Berkley; our new Congresswoman Dina Titus; a great friend of mine, our—of my earliest supporters, cochair for Nevadans for Obama, Steven Horsford. And although she's not here tonight, she's doing a great job on behalf of everybody here in Vegas, the Nevada assembly speaker, Barbara Buckley. Please give her a big round of applause.

It is a pleasure to be here tonight on behalf of my good friend, your Senator, this Nation's Senate majority leader, Harry Reid. The last few years, Harry has done an extraordinary job as the leader of the U.S. Senate. And that's not easy, by the way. One of the last majority leaders wrote a book—titled it "Herding Cats." And that's what dealing with the Senate is all about. It is not easy. But Harry is somebody who has consistently fought on those issues that matter not just to Democrats but to middle class families all across America: good jobs, affordable health care, clean energy, world-class schools. This is a man who still makes his decisions and chooses battles based on the values that he was raised with in Searchlight, Nevada. *[Applause]* Are you from Searchlight? *[Laughter]* We got some Searchlight folks here. And that's why we need to keep Harry Reid exactly where he belongs, as the leader of the U.S. Senate, as somebody who carries the voices and the values of Searchlight and Nevada, all the small towns across America that have been forgotten for so long. He gives voice to forgotten people in Washington, DC.

Now, being back here with all of you in Nevada tonight reminds me of why I like getting out of Washington every so often. *[Laughter]* Because it brings back a lot of memories of all those days that I spent here on the campaign trail. And I want to start tonight by saying thank you, because I know that I'm here because of so many people like you, people all across the country who made calls and knocked on doors and registered voters and dug deep and gave what they could, because you were hungry for new leadership and new ideas and a new kind of politics. And working with Harry Reid, that's what I'm delivering right now.

You believed that after an era of selfishness and greed, we can reclaim a sense of responsibility, from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington. You believed that instead of huge inequalities, we can restore a sense of fairness to our economy, building a new foundation for lasting growth and prosperity. You believed that in a time of war and turmoil, we can stand strong against our enemies and stand firmly for our ideals and show a new face of American leadership to the world.

That's the change you believed in, that's the trust you placed in me, and that's something I'll never forget. But we all know that winning the election was just the beginning of our work. That victory alone wasn't the change that we sought. It was just the opportunity to make

change. And I don't know about you, but I think it's fair to say that over these past 4 months, we've done a pretty good job of seizing that opportunity.

To jumpstart job creation, get our economy moving again, we helped with—we passed, with the help of Harry Reid and both Houses of Congress, the most ambitious economic recovery package in our Nation's history, gave tax cuts to 95 percent of working families, put people back to work modernizing our health care system, rebuilding our crumbling roads and bridges, investing in renewable energy that will help boost our economy and preserve our planet.

We launched plans to stabilize our housing market, unfreeze our credit markets, and ensure the survival of our auto industry in this new century. We passed a budget that will cut our deficit in half while making investments to spur long-term growth. We lifted the ban on Federal funding for stem cell research. We expanded the Children's Health Insurance Program to cover 11 million children in need. We passed a national service bill to create hundreds of thousands of opportunities for people to serve in their communities. We passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act—the first bill I signed into law—because we should have equal pay for equal work. And just last week we passed a series of reforms that won't just change policies in Washington, they'll change the way business is done in Washington.

Last Tuesday, we brought auto executives, labor unions, environmental groups, Democrats, and Republicans together to set a national fuel-efficiency standard for our cars and trucks for the first time in history, weaning ourselves off of Middle Eastern oil, but also saving our planet in the process. On Wednesday, I signed bipartisan legislation to help homeowners and crack down on predatory lenders who seek to take advantage of them. On Friday, I signed two laws, one that will protect consumers from unfair rate hikes and abusive fees levied by credit card companies, another that will eliminate waste in our defense budget and save taxpayers billions of dollars. And today I nominated a brilliant individual to serve on the United States Supreme Court, Judge Sonia Sotomayor.

Let me just tell you a little bit about this woman. This is a woman who will bring more experience on the bench than anyone currently serving on the Supreme Court had when they were appointed: She graduated the top of her class at Princeton; editor of the Law Journal at Yale; prosecutor in the Manhattan DA's office; corporate litigator; 6 years as a trial judge on the U.S. District Court; her 11th year on the U.S. Court of Appeals, the second-highest court in the land. Nobody can say she's not qualified to be on the Supreme Court.

But as impressive and meaningful as Judge Sotomayor's sterling credentials in the law are, her extraordinary life journey is even more exceptional. Born in the South Bronx—[*applause*—raised in a—hey, South Bronx. We got everybody here. We got Searchlight, we got South Bronx. [*Laughter*] All right, I'm not going to shout out everybody's—[*applause*]. Where was I? [*Laughter*] I'm talking about the next Supreme Court Justice, born in the South Bronx, raised in a housing project by parents who came to New York from Puerto Rico during the Second World War. Father was a factory worker with a third-grade education, didn't speak English. When Sonia was just 9, her father passed away. Her mother worked 6 days a week as a nurse to provide for Sonia and her brother, buying the only encyclopedias in the neighborhood, sending their children to Catholic school out of a belief that with a good education here in America all things are possible.

Sonia Sotomayor's life is proof that all things are possible. And when she ascends those marble steps to assume her seat on the highest court of the land, America will take another

important step towards realizing the ideal that's chiseled above its entrance: Equal justice under the law.

So I'm inspired by her. I'm honored to nominate her. And I know that Harry Reid and others in the Senate will make sure that she is confirmed as our next Supreme Court Justice.

And I know that because Harry has just as improbable a story. And so do I. And that's what politics should be about, remembering that, for a whole lot of folks, life isn't easy. They're not born into advantage. But what sets America apart is the fact that we can make of our lives what we will. Yes we can. And that's what we're doing in Washington every day, figuring out how can we give a helping hand to ordinary Americans like Sonia Sotomayor's mother, like a young Harry Reid who needs a scholarship, maybe, like a Barack Obama who might need that inspiring teacher in a school.

And all in all, we're making progress on the important issues of the day, the issues that are going to matter not just for this generation but for the next generation. I'm pleased with how far we've come, but I'm not satisfied. I'm confident in the future, but I'm not content, not when there are workers out there still out of a job and families who still can't pay their bills, not when there are too many Americans who can't afford health care and so many of our kids being left behind, not when we're not leading the world in developing the new energy sources of the 21st century. We have come a long way. We can see the light on the horizon, but we've got a much longer journey ahead.

And that's why all of you are here tonight. That's why you're digging deep. That's why I know you're going to make those phone calls and knock on those doors and get to the polls again next November so that we make sure that Harry Reid continues his devoted service to this great State.

And that's why I'm here tonight, because I can't bring the change I promised all by myself. I can't rebuild an economy by myself. I can't reform our health care system and education systems and preserve our environment and keep our Nation safe all alone. That's not how it works. I need partners in Congress, leaders who are determined to make a difference for the folks they represent. And right now, more than ever before, we need their help. America needs their help. We need their help to build schools that meet high standards and close the achievement gap and prepare our kids for the challenges of the 21st century, reward teachers for performance and give them new pathways for advancement.

We need their help to reach the goal I've set for our education in this country that by 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. We need their help to pass a comprehensive energy and climate bill that will finally reduce our dangerous dependence on foreign oil, offer new energy incentives to reduce the pollution that threatens our health and our climate.

We need a plan that will create millions of new jobs, producing wind turbines and solar panels, like you're doing right here in Nevada. Because the nation that leads the 21st century in clean energy, that nation will lead in the global economy. America can and must be that nation.

We need help to create a 21st century health care system to cut costs for families and businesses across America. And working with Harry Reid and other Members of Congress, we are going to do everything we can to achieve comprehensive health care reform by the end of this year. We've been waiting too long. We're going to make it happen this year.

And finally, even as we do all this, we need to restore fiscal discipline in Washington so we don't leave our children and grandchildren with a mountain of debt. Already, my administration has identified more than 100 Government programs that we can reduce or eliminate. They're not working the way they should. That will save taxpayers nearly \$17 billion next year alone. We're going through the budget line by line looking for more places where we can shift dollars from things that don't work to things that do.

We're living through extraordinary times. We didn't ask for the challenges that we face, but we are determined to answer the call to meet those challenges, to cast aside the old arguments and overcome the stubborn divisions and move forward as one people and one Nation. It won't be easy, Nevada. There will be setbacks, Las Vegas. It will take time but I promise you, I promise you, I'll always tell you the truth about the challenges we face. I'll always tell you the truth about the steps we're taking to meet them. I will continue to measure my progress by the progress that the American people see in their own lives.

And so if you stand with me, if you stand with Harry Reid, I know that years from now we will look back on this time, at this moment and say, that's when the American people came together to reclaim their future to write the next great chapter of the American story.

We can only do it with Harry Reid, and I can only do it with you, the people of Las Vegas, the people of Nevada, the people of America. Thank you. God bless you. May God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:33 p.m. in the Colosseum at Caesars Palace hotel. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers Bette Midler, Sheryl Crow, Rachael Yamagata, Rita Rudner, and Clint Holmes; former Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott; and Celina Sotomayor, mother, and Juan Sotomayor, brother, of Supreme Court Associate Justice-designate Sotomayor. The remarks were released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 27. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Senator Harry Reid, fundraiser in Las Vegas, NV.

*Locations:* Las Vegas, NV.

*Names:* Berkley, Shelley; Buckley, Barbara; Crow, Sheryl; Holmes, Clint; Horsford, Steven; Lott, Chester T. "Trent"; Midler, Bette; Reid, Harry; Rudner, Rita; Sotomayor, Celina; Sotomayor, Juan; Sotomayor, Sonia; Titus, Alice D. "Dina"; Yamagata, Rachael.

*Subjects:* Budget, Federal : Deficit; Budget, Federal : Fiscal year 2010 budget; Budget, Federal : Government programs, spending reductions; Budget, Federal : National debt; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Strengthening efforts; Business and industry : Credit Card Accountability, Responsibility, and Disclosure Act of 2009; Civil rights : Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009; Congress : Senate :: Majority leader; Defense, Department of : Weapons System Acquisition Reforms Act of 2009; Economy, national : American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009; Economy, national : Credit markets, stabilization efforts; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Global competitiveness; Education : School improvement and renovation; Education : Standards and school accountability; Education : Teachers ; Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies; Energy : Foreign sources; Energy : Fuel efficiency standards, strengthening efforts; Energy : Solar and wind energy; Environment : Climate change; Fraud Enforcement and Recovery Act of 2009 ; Health and Human Services, Department of : State Children's

Health Insurance Program (SCHIP); Health and medical care : Cost control reforms; Health and medical care : Information technology; Housing : Helping Families Save Their Homes Act of 2009; Housing : Mortgage refinancing regulations; Judiciary : Supreme Court :: Associate Justice-designate; Nevada : Democratic Party event; Nevada : President's visits; Nevada : Solar and wind energy; Science and technology : Stem cell research; Taxation : Tax relief; Transportation : Highway system, modernization efforts.

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